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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1806
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0505
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2663
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1623
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000934

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MTS, EAP/RSP, PRM AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2013

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [TH](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES MINISTERS TO ADDRESS BURMESE

REFUGEE TRAFFICKING REPORTS

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 495

[B](#). KUALA LUMPUR 786

[C](#). KUALA LUMPUR 799

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Rapson for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Ambassador on October 8 wrote to both Foreign Minister Rais Yatim and Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar, drawing the ministers' attention to reports of the trafficking of refugees from Malaysian immigration detention camps to Thailand and urging Malaysian government actions to address this human rights concern (text of the letters included below). The Ambassador's letters followed approaches over the past months by the Embassy (ref A) and Staffdel Luse (refs B and C) to Malaysian authorities over these trafficking reports. The Ambassador's letters also noted Malaysia's continued cooperation with the large-scale U.S. refugee resettlement program for Burmese refugees.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador raised the issue of reported trafficking of refugees with Foreign Minister Rais on October 21 on the margins of a Foreign Ministry gathering for chiefs of mission from the Americas. The Foreign Minister acknowledged receipt of the Ambassador's letter, and stated that the issues presented therein were "of concern" to Malaysian authorities and would be treated "seriously." Rais said that to facilitate the government's response, the GOM would appreciate any additional details of the allegations, and the Ambassador agreed to provide further available information. Polcouns and Human Rights Officer will brief senior Home Ministry officials on October 23 on the reports of trafficking of refugees.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Text of the Ambassador's October 8 letters to the Foreign Minister and Home Minister:

Dear Mr. Minister:

Please allow me to express deep appreciation for the continued cooperation Malaysia provides for the extensive and ongoing U.S. program to resettle Burmese refugees residing in Malaysia to the United States. With the support of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and in coordination with your authorities, approximately 9,000 refugees have been resettled from Malaysia to the United States over the past two years. The protection of all refugees is an important focus of the United Nations and the international community, as well as my own government.

I would like to take this occasion to bring to your attention reports carried in the Malaysian and international media of

alleged trafficking of Burmese refugees from Malaysia immigration detention facilities to trafficking syndicates along the Malaysia-Thai border. These reports also allege that some Malaysian officials are involved in the transport, delivery and sale of Burmese refugees into the hands of traffickers inside the border of Thailand. A number of former refugees resettled from Malaysia are now U.S. citizens and the allegations have attracted the attention of U.S. congressional representatives who may prepare a public report on this issue. My Embassy would be pleased to share further information with your officials if that would assist in determining the degree of veracity of the anecdotes and other reports.

My Embassy stands ready to work with your government to help in any way to address these concerns. My purpose in writing to you is to offer our cooperation in tackling these issues in advance of growing media and international attention. I have written also to His Excellency the (Home Minister/Foreign Minister) in this regard.

(End text)
KEITH